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REMARKS

This is a full and timely response to the outstanding Office Action mailed May 10, 2006. Upon entry of the amendments in this response claims 1-17, 19-42, and 44-51 are pending. More specifically, claims 1, 19, 22, 25, 27, 44, 47, and 50 are amended and claims 18 and 43 are canceled. Claims 18 and 43 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Applicant takes this action merely to reduce the number of issues and to facilitate early allowance and issuance of the present application. Applicant reserves the right to pursue the subject matter of these canceled claims in a continuing application, if applicant so chooses, and does not intend to dedicate any of the canceled subject matter to the public. These amendments are specifically described hereinafter.

I. Present Status of Patent Application

Claims 1-7, 9-11, 17, 26-32, 34-36, 42, and 51 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by *Reininger, et al* (U.S. Patent No. 5,426,463). Claims 12-15 and 37-40 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over *Reininger, et al* (U.S. Patent No. 5,426,463). Claims 8, 16, 18-25, 33, 41, and 43-50 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim. To the extent that these rejections have not been rendered moot by the cancellation of claims, they are respectfully traversed.

II. Allowability of claims 8, 16, 18-25, 33, 41, and 43-50

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the indication of the allowability of claims 8, 16, 18-25, 33, 41, and 42-50. Independent claim 1 has been amended to include the subject matter of claim 18. Independent claim 27 has been amended to include the subject matter of claim 43. Therefore, Application respectfully submits that claims 1 and 27 are allowable. Because independent claims 1 and 27 as amended are allowable over the cited references of record, dependent claims 2-17, 19-26, 28-42, and 44-51 (which depend from independent claims 1 and 27) are allowable as a matter of law for at least the reason that dependent claims 2-17, 19-26, 28-42, and 44-51 contain all the steps/features of independent claim 1 and 27. *See Minnesota*

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Mining and Manufacturing Co. v. Chemque, Inc., 303 F.3d 1294, 1299 (Fed. Cir. 2002)
Jeneric/Pentron, Inc. v. Dillon Co., 205 F.3d 1377, 54 U.S.P.Q.2d 1086 (Fed. Cir. 2000);
Wahpeton Canvas Co. v. Frontier Inc., 870 F.2d 1546, 10 U.S.P.Q.2d 1201 (Fed. Cir. 1989).

Additionally and notwithstanding the foregoing reasons for allowability of independent claims 1 and 27, dependent claims 2-17, 19-26, 28-42, and 44-51 recite further features and/or combinations of features, as are apparent by examination of the claims themselves, that are patently distinct from the cited references of record. Hence, there are other reasons why dependent claims 2-17, 19-26, 28-42, and 44-51 are allowable.

III. Miscellaneous Issues

Any other statements in the Office Action that are not explicitly addressed herein are not intended to be admitted. In addition, any and all findings of inherency are traversed as not having been shown to be necessarily present. Furthermore, any and all findings of well-known art and official notice, or statements interpreted similarly, should not be considered well known for the particular and specific reasons that the claimed combinations are too complex to support such conclusions and because the Office Action does not include specific findings predicated on sound technical and scientific reasoning to support such conclusions.

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CONCLUSION

In light of the foregoing amendments and for at least the reasons set forth above, Applicant respectfully submits that all objections and/or rejections have been traversed, rendered moot, and/or accommodated, and that the now pending claims 1-17, 19-42, and 44-51 are in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and allowance of the present application and all pending claims are hereby courteously requested. If, in the opinion of the Examiner, a telephonic conference would expedite the examination of this matter, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned agent at (770) 933-9500.

Respectfully submitted,


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